



Legislative Bulletin.....October 23, 2001

PATRIOT ACT: As of press time the House had not taken up the Conference Report for the PATRIOT Anti-terrorism Act and the final text of the bill was unavailable, however the Conference Agreement is expected to include the following changes:

1. The sunset will move from 3 years (with a possible two-year extension) to 4 years;
2. The money laundering provisions approved by the House last Wednesday will be added.

Recorded Votes Will Be Held on the Following Measures:

H.R. 3086—Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act (HEROES) (McKeon)

Summary: Authorizes the Secretary of Education to make waivers and modifications to federal financial student loan programs for individuals affected by the terrorist attacks of September 11th to ensure that such individuals are not placed in a worse financial situation as a result of the attacks and that administrative requirements are minimized. Affected individuals include those serving on active duty during the current national emergency, those who reside or are employed in an area declared a disaster area, and those who have suffered a direct economic hardship as a result of the attacks. In addition the bill authorizes the Secretary to provide relief from requirements to institutions of higher education, lenders, and other entities participating in student assistance programs.

The authority to issue waivers and modifications terminates on September 30, 2003.

Cost to the Taxpayer: A cost estimate is unavailable and would vary based on the type of relief provided by the Secretary of Education.

Does the Bill Create New Government Programs or Regulations: NO.

RSC Concerns: No Known Concerns.

H.R. 3160—Bioterrorism Enforcement (Tauzin)

Summary: The bill establishes criminal penalties for

1. the unsafe handling (defined as reckless disregard for the public health and safety) of a biological agent or toxin;
2. the unregistered possession (knowingly) of a biological agent or toxin;
3. the transfer (knowingly) of a biological agent or toxin to an unregistered person; and
4. the possession or transfer of a biological agent or toxin by a restricted person (such as those prohibited from owning a handgun and aliens without a waiver from HHS).

The bill also directs the HHS to issue regulations establishing standards governing the possession, use, and transfer of biological agents and toxins.

Finally, the bill requires HHS to establish regulations providing for the registration with HHS of those individuals and entities that possess and use biological toxins and agents. While such information would not be subject to a Freedom of Information Act request, the government is authorized to release information for the purpose of protecting the public health and safety.

The list of biological agents or toxins is the same as the list established pursuant to the Anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act.

Cost to the Taxpayer: A cost estimate is unavailable, but the government would incur costs related to the new regulations, establishment of a registry, and enforcement of new criminal statutes.

Does the Bill Create New Government Programs or Regulations: YES, the bill creates new regulations and establishes a federal registry of those who possess and use biological toxins or agents.

RSC Concerns: No Known Concerns. While concerns have been previously expressed about the creation of a registry of chemicals used in commercial enterprises that might be subject to a Freedom of Information Act request, the bill seeks to resolve these problems by prohibiting such requests.

H.R. 2924—To provide authority to the Federal Power Marketing Administrations to reduce vandalism and destruction of property (Calvert)

Summary: H.R. 2924 would authorize the Administrators of the Western Area Power Administration, the Southwestern Power Administration, and the Southeastern Power Administration to each execute programs to reduce vandalism and destruction of property that is under their respective jurisdictions. Under such programs, each Administration may pay cash awards not larger than \$1000 per individual for the provision of information or evidence leading to the arrest and prosecution of individuals causing damage to federal property (under their respective jurisdictions).

These three Administrations own thousands of miles of transmission lines, as well as dozens of communication sites.

Cost to Taxpayers: CBO estimates that H.R. 2924 would cost the three Administrations less than \$75,000 a year.

Does the Bill Create New Federal Programs or Rules?: Yes, the bill would allow the creation of new federal anti-vandalism programs.

RSC Concerns: No known concerns.

Other Measures Adopted By Voice Vote Today:

H.R. 2899—War Bonds

Authorizes Secretary of the Treasury to designate a series of bonds already authorized under current law as “Freedom Bonds.” The bill does not authorize a new series of bonds.

The bill also requires study related to administrative costs of the public debt.

H.R. 2792—Disabled Veterans Service Dog and Health Care Improvement Act

Modifies current Veterans Programs by:

- Making approximately 1.4 million more veterans eligible for free health care (as opposed to the co-pay system) by moving to a county formula (rather than national formula) for the income threshold
- Mandating that all VA facilities provide chiropractic care (currently the VA does not provide chiropractic care)
- Authorizing the VA to provide service dogs to veterans with certain disabilities
- Establishing a nursing commission
- Reauthorizing the ability of the VA to bill third-party insurance

CBO estimates that the bill will cost taxpayers approximately \$3 billion over the next five years subject to appropriations.

H.Con.Res. 184

Provides for the joint assembly of the House and the Senate to humbly seek the blessings of Providence for forgiveness, reconciliation, unity, and charity for all people of the

United States, thereby assisting the Nation to realize its potential as the champion of hope, the vindicator of the defenseless, and the guardian of freedom.

H.R. 2925—To amend the Reclamation Recreation Management Act of 1992 in order to provide for the security of dams, facilities, and resources under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Reclamation

The bill provide penalties for violation of regulations on reclamation property and authorizes the Secretary of Interior to utilize other federal law enforcement officers and state and local officers to protect Reclamation property.

H.R. 980—To establish the Moccasin Bend National Historic Site in the State of Tennessee as a unit of the National Park System

The bill establishes the Moccasin Bend National Historical Site in Tennessee as “a unit of the National Park System.” The site will consist of approximately 911.5 acres as the main area and an additional 97-acre parcel as the Trail of Tears Civil War Corridor.

H.R. 1814—To amend the National Trails System to designate the Metacomet-Monadnock-Sunapee-Mattabesett Trail extending through western New Hampshire, western Massachusetts, and central Connecticut for study for potential addition to the National Trails System

The bill authorizes the National Park Service (NPS) to do a study of approximately 260 miles of trails (three existing trails plus additional territories) for addition to the National Trails System.